



United States Senate

January 12, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Chairman, Financial Services &
General Government Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member, Financial Services &
General Government Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairman Van Hollen, and
Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

As the Appropriations Committee and the Financial Services & General Government Subcommittee prepare for upcoming spending packages, I urge you to consider including substantial emergency funding for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in anticipation of a massive backlog of tax returns and questions from taxpayers this tax season.

As you know, the IRS has experienced major delays in processing tax returns. According to the National Taxpayer Advocate, the IRS finished last year's tax filing season with a backlog of more than 35 million tax returns, and only 7 percent of callers requesting help from the IRS were able to reach someone to assist them. On Monday, Treasury Department officials said that the IRS will face "enormous challenges" in processing returns this season too.

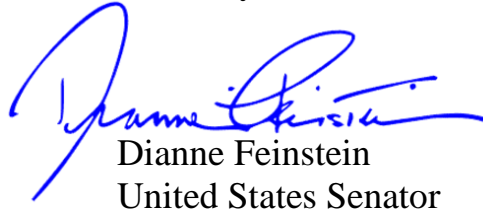
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress has asked the IRS to do much more than it usually does, including distributing stimulus payments, administering an expanded child tax credit, and implementing several other new tax credits. The pandemic also forced the IRS to close in-person processing centers and require its employees to work from home. Compounding these issues,

the IRS's budget has declined by 19 percent since 2010, reducing customer service and audit rates and simply not allowing the IRS to keep pace with what we ask of it. This must change.

The "Build Back Better Act" included an \$80 billion increase to the IRS's budget over 10 years, which would go a long way in restoring the agency's ability to fulfill its responsibilities. Given the delay in passing that legislation and the immediate needs at the IRS for the tax season just underway, I suggest that appropriating immediate emergency supplemental funding would be a timelier way to help the IRS rebuild its capacity to efficiently process taxpayers' returns, refunds, and questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to working with you to ensure the IRS has the resources it needs to operate effectively, and that Americans receive the taxpayer service they deserve.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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